

Governor's Proposed FY23 Budget Adjustments
Appropriations Hearing
HB 5037 AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30th, 2023
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Thursday, February 24th, 2022
Alonzo Gorham

Good afternoon, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan, Representative Nolan, Senator Miner, Representative France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Alonzo Gorham, and I am a registered voter in the City of Bridgeport. I am testifying regarding HB 5037 and the Department of Mental Health and Addition Services (DMHAS) Budget.

I have been a member of Bridge House in Bridgeport since 2012. I was looking for support services because I was isolating. My doctor introduced me to Bridge House. Once there, I made friends. I became really excited about helping with the food pantry, placing the online orders each week, stocking the items that came in, doing the required paperwork (weekly and monthly statistics, etc.) and even driving the agency vehicles to pick up the food items from the Connecticut Foodshare warehouse in Bridgeport. I am a church musician and I have played the keyboard at our holiday parties and for our Black History program. I became very excited and felt so good about myself, because I was able to contribute my talents to the program's operation.

In addition to my contributions at Bridge House, I attend the Catchment Area Council meetings, which are important to me because I get to learn about the wide array of resources that are available to me and to other people like me. It also makes me feel very good to know that I am at the same table with my providers. Also, I attended the Greater Bridgeport Disability Advocates for several years. This, too, was a great feeling for me to because I was treated with dignity and worth. I was able to have a voice in what services could be created or improved for me and people like me.

If there was no Bridge House, I would return to being depressed and isolated. Please consider increasing the funding for mental health services, so that places like Bridge House can stay open.

Thank you very much for listening to my story.